

Serious efforts by State to prevent support for Iraq's nonconventional weapons (NCW) programs have a substantial history. U.S. regulations preventing export of NCW-related items to Iraq are based on non-proliferation policies dating from the 1970's (nuclear nonproliferation) and the 1980's (CW and missile proliferation). Interdiction efforts directed against CW and missile programs, using U.S. intelligence to goad allies into action, date to 1988. Similarly, right after the Gulf war ceasefire in August 1988, a global cable was sent urging states to maintain active efforts to prevent nuclear weapons materials from reaching Iraq and Iran.

December 1989 Missile Launch

In December 1989, Assistant Secretary Clarke chaired a PCC on Iraq's launch of an alleged space-launch vehicle. He sought to get at why U.S. intelligence didn't know Iraq had such capabilities beforehand and to galvanize the interagency community into more effective action against the Iraqi missile program.

One of the taskings made at that meeting, according to State records, was for the Commerce Department to prepare recommendations for export control changes that would enhance our efforts against Iraqi NCW programs. As of February, we were still waiting for this input. Records after that do not mention the tasking further.

In January and February, several Nonproliferation PCC subcommittee meetings followed up on Iraqi NCW programs. Particular emphasis was placed on efforts to clear intelligence that could be shared with fellow nonproliferation states on Iraq's clandestine procurement network. Some intell was eventually cleared for use at the Australia Group meeting in June and bilaterally with the Swiss and Austrians.

Multilateral Efforts

In mid-December 1989, the U.S. delegation at the Australia Group meeting in Paris highlighted U.S. concern about Iraqi CW capabilities. It reiterated the same to Soviet counterparts at nonproliferation bilaterals.

In late February, an "Iraqi shopping list" demarche was sent out to potential supplier states. This cable identified at length technologies that we believed Iraq was likely to seek for its missile program. It was very widely distributed, and

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Review

June 1, 1992

well responded to. Non-MTCR countries like Austria and Sweden both praised it and promised to act to prevent Iraq getting these technologies.

March: The Heat Turns Up

In late March, a series of events began that heightened international attention to Iraq's NCW programs: the nuclear triggers sting operation; press reports of intell indicating Iraqi missiles were targeted on Israel; Saddam's threat to "burn up half of Israel;" and the big-gun episode.

-- The Customs/State krytron sting showed we were focused on Iraq's nuclear program.

-- Saddam's tirade resulted in a demarche where we bluntly told Iraq that its NCW-related actions were deeply worrying and not responsible

-- There were several meetings, with allies, with Arab ambassadors here in Washington, etc., where we specifically raised concern about Iraq's NCW program.

In late April, a CIA Executive Brief said that these Iraqi actions stemmed from concern about Israeli intentions in the region, and that it was unlikely Iraq would attack Israel.

Export Controls and the Iraqi Proliferation Threat

Shortly after Saddam's March speech, a PM-led effort (with ES closely involved) began to identify ways in which existing U.S. export controls could be improved for the specific purpose of preventing any support for Iraq's NCW program. A first draft of CW-related options dates to April 10.

A Deputies Committee meeting on Iraq was called for April 16. In a Covey-to-Kimmitt memo, it was noted that PM, T and Commerce wanted to consider expanding current controls of exports to Iraq, citing specifically CW-related equipment and missile equipment beyond what is on the MTCR Annex. The memo said the Nonproliferation PCC would look at "what can be done."

This DC resulted in a tasking to the Nonproliferation PCC to develop an initiative for Iraq. The paper was not ready when NEA's general options paper on Iraq was forwarded on May 16 to the DC. The DC met again on May 29, and noted that the Nonproliferation PCC would meet in early June to develop specific recommendations on Iraq's nonproliferation threat.

June: PCC Action Plan

At a June 12, 1990 Nonproliferation PCC meeting, a task force on Iraq was set up. It was charged with preparing an action plan for dealing with the proliferation threat posed by

Iraq. Assistant Secretary Clarke ordered a paper on export controls, making its recommendations more specific and effective with respect to Iraq. The Iraq effort was explicitly cited as a model which would be the pattern for task forces dealing with other countries of proliferation concern.

July: State Requests Controls

An action plan on Iraq was developed by the end of June, which incorporated missile and CBW proliferation. Early in July, input was added on Iraq's nuclear program. At the July 10 and 13 PCC meetings, the Iraq-specific and more general proposals for enhancing proliferation-related export controls were melded together. After these meetings, it was decided to press ahead with proposals that had wide inter-agency agreement by having Secretary Baker request Secretary Mossbacher directly to impose Iraq-focussed proliferation controls.

On July 25, this request from State to Commerce was made for the imposition of foreign policy, proliferation-focused controls. These proposals focused heavily on Iraq, and specifically cited the need to impose controls on items that could contribute to Iraq's nonconventional weapons program.

After Kuwait

The invasion of Kuwait and the application of a complete embargo on Iraq under the IEEPA obviated the immediate need for Iraq-specific export controls. On September 21, Commerce informally forwarded to us a draft regulation which proposes to implement roughly half of the steps requested in the July 25 memo. At a September 28 PCC, Commerce Assistant Secretary Galvin said this draft regulation would be circulated formally to the interagency community in the near future.

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